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SUBJECT: SE GRATION MEETING WITH JUBA UN OFFICIALS

¶1. (SBU) Summary: In a meeting February 18 with U.S. Special Envoy General Scott Gration, UN officials in Juba reported that elections mobilization is underway, food insecurity in the South is on the rise, and the need for additional support and focus on capacity building in the South is acute. They highlighted the fact that recent press reporting on the Government of Southern Sudan's (GOSS) inability to govern could be a self-fulfilling prophecy and asked for Gration's support to publicly counter such assumptions. Finally, they asked for the U.S. to provide more assistance on the security front as well as with development and growth initiatives. End Summary.

Elections Mobilizing Underway -----

¶2. (SBU) In a February 18 meeting, UN Resident Coordinator David Gressly and UN Humanitarian Coordinator Lise Grande told U.S. Special Envoy Gration that elections mobilization is underway and thus far has progressed without serious incidents. Gressly said that he was especially surprised that there had been no violence around the nominations process, although tensions regarding the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) independents have not abated. He is most concerned with the time immediately following elections and the possible June run-off election for national presidency of Sudan.

¶3. (SBU) Grande explained that many of the current SPLM problems stem from the ideological split between those that just want to get to the referendum and those that want to win the national presidential election, and who are focused on democratic change. The National Congress Party (NCP) is clearly not comfortable with the idea of going to a second round; and if they are pushed to this, all bets are off. Grande suggested that one possibility for the NCP is to convince Lam Akol not to run in the south in return for the SPLM's withdrawal of Yasir Arman from the national election. Gressly was skeptical about the likelihood of such a swap.

Food and Human Security -----

¶4. (SBU) Grande reported that this year will be one of the worse for food security throughout Southern Sudan. She told us that the UN currently estimates that 4.3 million people will need some food assistance at some point in 2010. She believes the worse period may last only two months. However Grande also observed that 1.8 million people will be at higher risk and may need food assistance for a longer period. World Food Program (WFP) currently believes it will need 200,000 tons of food in 2010. While the USG has been the biggest donor to date, Grande added, she wanted the U.S. to pressure other donors to provide support and assistance. She said there will also be a need for additional funding for voluntary returns in Southern Sudan.

Concerns Over Governance and Security

15. (SBU) While security is a valid concern in Southern Sudan and the GOSS needs more assistance in order to respond effectively, recent press reporting highlighting GOSS' lack of capacity to govern itself may be a self full-filling prophesy, Grande noted. Gressly pointed out that tribal and community conflict continues and that these are legitimate concerns, but should not suggest that the GOSS cannot govern itself. While the police and military need additional assistance to respond effectively to internal and external threats, the country will not devolve into Somalia style conflict in the streets of the capital. Grande specifically pointed to a recent Financial Times article that suggests that the south will plunge into chaos if southerners choose separation in the referendum next January 2011. Grande requested that the USG publicly counter such assumptions and continue supporting the GOSS on the security front to better enable them to prevent, mitigate and respond to local violence and conflict.

USG Assistance for Capacity

16. (SBU) In recent months there have been a number of initiatives and assessments aimed at capacity building in the GOSS, as well as other development initiatives. Who should pay for much of this technical assistance remains unclear, Grande explained. While IGAD countries are willing to send 200 technical advisers to Southern Sudan, the focus of their efforts, the source of funding, and the

KHARTOUM 00000296 002 OF 002

receptivity of the GOSS are unclear. Grande asked that the USG become more involved in this initiative. All agreed that there is great need of roads and other infrastructure, as well as agricultural and farming development. There is also a need to diversify from oil and attract a wider range of investment in Southern Sudan. She acknowledged that much of this assistance and investment must come from the World Bank and African Development Bank, as the U.S. cannot do it alone.
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